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# *Best Practice Fact Sheet – Workforce Development*

## *INTEGRATED BASIC EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING*

### *(I-BEST) - Washington State*

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#### **Program**

**Description:** Helps TANF clients qualify for targeted in-demand occupations by combining ABE/ESL with job skills and vocational training. Based on proven “tipping point” – level of knowledge and skills at which adults can begin to access family-wage jobs. Developed in Washington State, I-BEST is a national model for contextualized vocational education.

**Target Population:** Pre-college skilled students wanting to get on an education pathway to a career

**Goal:** 45 college level credits and a vocational certificate in a demand occupation

**Cost:** \$7000 per FTE per year, some of this can be covered by financial aid when available

**Evidence:** Third party analysis by Community College Research Center (see link below)  
Comparison Data Sources: WF Chartbook, reports by C. Wolfhagen, and SBCTC data matches with UI.

**Caseload Data:** 3% of current Washington caseload

#### **Services Overview:**

- Integrates ABE/GED and ESL skills development with vocational certificate training to move students further faster to living wage job skills.
- Strongest results from programs leading to 45 credits and certificate, but shorter programs do exist with lower credit load.

**Eligibility:** Mid-level academic skills (NRS level 3, roughly equivalent to middle school level reading and math skills), mitigation of barriers to successful participation, motivation to enter and complete program.

#### **Findings:**

- Completion rate for I-BEST is about 78%.
- Work/earnings outcomes for TANF participants (latest full year 2008-2009):
- Employment - 74% (compared to short term voc training - 61%, or ABE alone 50%)
- Quarterly earnings - \$4876 (compared to short term voc training - \$3305, or ABE alone \$2810)
- Participation (annual average 2008-2009) - Full-time Voc and I-BEST - 64% (compared to Job Search - 31% and Supported works - 29%)
- Third party analysis by Community College Research Center - [http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/abepds/multivariateanalysis\\_workingpaper16\\_may2009.pdf](http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/abepds/multivariateanalysis_workingpaper16_may2009.pdf)

#### **Implications for policymakers and program developers to consider:**

- CE data indicate that approximately 82% of the TANF population lack Tipping Point level skills and knowledge (45 college level credits and a vocational certificate).
- Current WorkFirst program emphasis is on part-time, open-entry/open exit, short term programs rather than comprehensive interventions like Tipping Point oriented I-BEST programs.

- Vocational education, especially longer term training, is under-utilized in WorkFirst despite greater benefit in terms of participation and client outcomes.
- In 2008-09 WA state TANF caseload:
  - About 8-10% of caseload was in ABE.
  - Between 4 and 6% caseload were in full time vocational training - some long term and some short term. Federal limit is 30%.
  - About 3% of TANF parents were in I-BEST programs in 2008-2009. .

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